3: Lorimer L-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1935 AV7 Burusho AV7

My mode of procedure was as follows, and in all the circumstances it seems to have justified itself. For a few weeks I worked with Nazer of Aliabad, head of my establishment of domestic servants, eliciting from him the principal inflectional forms of the language as well as the chief pronominal forms and the numerals. Nazer, though illiterate, was a man with excellent brains and the instincts of a teacher and elucidator, and Hindustani provided a medium of intercourse. After this I secured the services of Imām Yār Bèg, brother of the Wazir of Hunza and a Jemadar in the Gilgit Scouts, and began to take down texts to his dictation. Each day I wrote down as much as I had time to, making every effort to record the sounds phonetically as far as I was able to appreciate them, and to make sure of the division of the words. I did not make a point of fully following and understanding what I wrote. The same day, or the next working-day, I read out to him what I had written, corrected it as far as I could from every point of view and strove to arrive at the exact meaning of every word and sentence. I made notes of the translation and obtained the principal parts of verbs, the plural forms of nouns and so on, and recorded other words and phrases that were suggested by those of the text.

All this was very hurriedly done, but the results have in general proved satisfactory and the texts themselves seem to be readily intelligible to Burushaski-speakers when read aloud to them. They will often complete a sentence and continue the narrative, where it is short, in much the same words as the original, for though there are no professional story-tellers in Hunza, many of the local stories or accounts of customs appear to be told habitually in a customary, if not stereotyped form.

Imam Yar Beg was a man of first-rate intelligence, great energy and a forceful personality. His own tastes ran naturally to sport and the practical. He was an enthusiastic and skilled polo player and I fear linguistic enquiries must sometimes have bored him, but he stayed the course until at length he unfortunately fell ill a month or two before I left the country. In that month or two,